

**DECISION NOTICE
TRAVELER'S REST PROJECT
MANAGEMENT DIRECTION
&
MASTER SITE PLAN**

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804
(406) 542-5500

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

Travelers' Rest State Park was established in March 2001, when The Conservation Fund purchased a 15-acre tract believed to hold the heart of the historic Lewis and Clark campsite from the Pat and Ernie Deschamps family. The Conservation Fund then donated the tract to FWP, which then established the site as a Montana State Park. Unable to commit personnel and financial resources to the park, FWP entered into a management agreement with the Travelers' Rest Preservation and Heritage Association (TRPHA), passing development, interpretive, management, and financial responsibilities to TRPHA. In 2002, archaeologists discovered physical evidence of the Lewis and Clark Expedition on the site, one of the few places along the length of the Lewis and Clark Trail where such evidence has been found.

In June 2002, the FWP Commission approved the acquisition of an additional 20 acres. FWP acquired 10 acres in fee title and 10 acres in conservation easement from the Holts. These parcels are north of the existing state park. A permanent access easement from Highway 12 accompanied the fee title parcel. This brought the park up to 35 acres in size.

In November 2003, the FWP Commission approved the acquisition of another 11.5 acres. This parcel was acquired from the Scullions and it is located between the initial 15 acres and Highway 93 to the East. It has good wildlife habitat, over 1000' of access to Lolo Creek, including access directly from Highway 93. The riparian area has many mature cottonwood and aspen, and is covered in native grasses. In addition, Lot 2 of the Van Ostrand Subdivision was acquired by TRPHA in November of 2003. This 4.5 acre piece is located directly SW of the initial 15 acres and has the old historic barn. With these two additions, the park is now 51 acres in size.

Discovered virtually at the eve of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, Travelers' Rest will certainly become a destination for the many thousands of visitors with an interest in this important event in U.S. history. The number of modern-day travelers also represent tremendous economic opportunities for Lolo and the surrounding area. Therefore, the park must be developed quickly in order to prepare for those visitors, and create an experience that encourages those visitors to return, while also remaining sensitive to cultural and environmental resources.

Planning has been ongoing for many years, and a Draft Management Direction has been created to guide FWP and TRPHA through the coming years of the bicentennial commemoration (See Appendix C – Draft Travelers' Rest State Park Management Direction). The partners have also created a Conceptual Master Site Plan to help in the site development and interpretation (See Appendix B – Conceptual Master Plan).

During the summer of 2003 and shortly after the EA was circulated for public comment, the National Trust for Historic Preservation through a generous grant from the Dumke Foundation, hired the Portico

Group, to draw all the past planning efforts together to produce an Implementation Plan for Travelers' Rest State Park. A 4-day onsite workshop involving TRPHA, FWP, Missoula County, Lolo Community and many other partners was held. The end result was a completed Implementation Plan in November 2003. The Implementation Plan is in line with the Draft Management Direction and the Conceptual Master Site Plan addressed in the EA.

The Implementation Plan has set for the Goals of the Travelers' Rest State Park and National Historic Site:

- To preserve and interpret the legacy of the Corps of Discovery's encampment at this place in 1805 and 1806.
- To help preserve and interpret the culture of the Native American people who have lived in and utilized this area for thousands of years.
- To present this place as a Crossroads and relate it to the larger historic events that made the west what it is today.
- To clarify the connections of this place to other places through an understanding of its natural resources, its indigenous plants and animals and the people who have passed through this spot searching for them.
- Through its links to the past the Park can create a place of rest and healing where all peoples can come together and gain perspective on the cultural and social changes that have occurred in the 200 years since the Corps of Discovery's visit to this region.

Funding will determine how quickly the developments are completed, thus a phased approach is proposed. Phase I construction will include some basic upgrades and improvements in and around the administrative buildings located off of Mormon Creek Road. It would include items such as: parking lot improvements & expansion, garage remodel, latrine installation, interpretive kiosk structure installation, removal of fencing & corrals, and disabled accessibility improvements to the office building. Phase II will include the construction of the infrastructure needed on the North side of Lolo Creek where the visitor services area will be located. This includes an entrance road, parking lot, trails, a bridge across Lolo Creek, visitor center, restroom facilities & septic system, a well, utilities, interpretive kiosk structures, picnic areas, landscaping, etc. This environmental assessment addressed all development proposed in the Master Site Plan and Management Direction.

PUBLIC PROCESS AND COMMENT

The Draft Environmental Assessment on the Management Direction & Master Site Plan was released for public review & comment. The public comment period began June 17, 2003, and ran through July 18, 2003. Legal notices were published in the Missoulian, Bitterroot Star, and the Helena Independent Record. Notices of this EA went out to 142 interested parties consisting of neighbors, conservation groups, Montana state legislators, Montana congressional members, county & state departments or agencies, federal agencies, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, Traveler's Rest Chapter, U of M, and the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commission. Also, there was a press release and a posting on the two web sites at Traveler's Rest and FWP.

A total of 9 responses were received from the public either through e-mail messages or written letters. Several of the responses brought up some concerns and issues that will be addressed below. In order to respond to these comments, they have been grouped into subjects or categories for clarity and brevity. They will be listed and then followed up with a response. They are as follows:

Part II. Environmental Review

- MT Dept. of Environmental Quality reminding FWP of the need for a storm permit for construction permits involving disturbed areas. *FWP Response. We will ensure that all permits needed, will be secured for each element of the project.*
- Page 9, Human Environment, Noise/Electrical, note 6a. As a landscape architect, not aware of any data that substantiates the sound attenuating qualities of plant materials. There may be some minor sound dampening through the use of substantial plantings of trees and shrubs. Sound can really only be contained or deflected through the use of fences, walls or earthen berms. *FWP Response. Appreciate the comment and stand corrected.*
- Parking lot material should be of a pervious, dust free material. *FWP Response. This will be taken under consideration when that element of the project is ready to be designed.*
- Under Item 12 of the checklist, Cultural/Historical Resources. The proposed action may result in potentially significant destruction or alteration of the resources, and not minor impact as designated in the checklist. Plans to install interpretive kiosks and signs, construct trails, plant or restore vegetation could and will have significant impact on the historical archeological record of the Lewis & Clark expedition. Planting vegetation for any purpose will have a negative impact on the archeological record. Urge extreme caution whenever any activities that could disrupt the soils are planned. *FWP Response. Agree with the concern & comment. Actions at the park so far have included consultation with archeologists and SHPO and will continue to consult with them when planning any improvements or structures or plantings as identified in the Master Site Plan to avoid potential impacts to the historic/cultural resources. By this document, the EA checklist stands corrected for this item 12.*
- Need to make a correction to a few errors in the EA. The original Travelers' Rest acquisition was purchased by the Richard King Mellon Foundation (RKMF), assisted by The Conservation Fund, and gifted by RKMF to FWP. The 10-acre addition on the north side was purchased by The Conservation Fund in 2002 from Holts and sold to FWP on August 4, 2003. Holts have committed the additional conservation and trail easement in a gift to be facilitated by TCF to FWP later this year. *FWP Response. So noted & correction made by this document.*
- From a natural resources perspective, concerned with potential effects on the water supply; primarily groundwater, but to some extent surface water. *FWP Response. TRPHA hired Professional Consultants, Inc. to do a feasibility analysis for water and sewage disposal facilities for the proposed Travelers' Rest State Park Visitor Center. The objective of the study was to provide TRPHA and the state with the different options that may be available for water supply and sewage disposal facilities. Utilization of the feasibility proposal in conjunction with the overall site objectives, archeological findings, architectural plans, future development plans, budgets, etc. should provide TRPHA and the state the necessary information needed to proceed with development of the most appropriate water and sewage disposal facilities. All of the information is in the PCI report entitled, "Well Supply and Sewage Disposal Evaluation Report" submitted January 2003. There are also State and County permits that will have to be obtained in order to install such a facility.*
- Concern from a neighbor about snowplowing at the administrative site, especially in years of heavy snow. The potential for surface runoff would occur with the increased accumulation of snow that results from snowplowing. Damage to neighbors fence during last winter. Hope that better planning for snow removal would occur in the future. *FWP Response. Will make sure that snowplowing does not damage fences or private property.*
- Concern about surface water contamination that might occur with the heavy use projected for the park during the L&C Bicentennial. Also, likely that a certain amount of off-trail visitor foot-traffic may occur and activities like fishing are undertaken. *FWP Response. Monitoring*

will have to take place to determine how much of an impact there may be once visitation begins to really increase. This can be a concern for any of the recreation & access sites that FWP manages where there is heavy streamside fishing occurring.

- Because of the increased human activity within Travelers' Rest State Park there is concern about altered behavior and impacts to wildlife like deer & crows. Nesting crows were displaced to the riparian zone along Lolo Creek. Deer are adjusting their daytime haunts and bedding activities. *FWP Response. Increased human activity can cause these species to alter their behavior but it should not have significant impact to the species in the area. Both of these species are adaptable to living around people. Both species are doing extremely well in the area.*
- "The development of Travelers' Rest State Park will result in the reduction in acreage of land used for agricultural purposes south of Lolo Creek as well as north of Lolo Creek. This was omitted under footnote 4d. The former owners of the land did pasture cattle & horses and raised two cuttings of hay. Nevertheless, those areas of the park south of Lolo creek which are left open should be most welcome to park visitors and residents of the Lolo Community." *FWP Response. Correction to footnote 4d is made via this document.*
- Concern about the impacts caused from the administrative access off Mormon Creek Road. Significant traffic has increased on this road for maintenance & service needs to the park. Noise levels have escalated and anticipate these levels to increase as maintenance equipment is operated, garbage & waste hauled, and increased services provided. Air pollution generated from this increased traffic is also a concern. In view of these impacts, it would be appropriate to utilize trees & shrubs between the administrative access road and the common boundary to help mitigate and buffer neighboring properties from the noise & air pollution created. Suggest hours of operation to be 8am-8pm with exceptions for special occasions. *FWP Response. Mitigate with trees & shrubs will definitely be considered. Currently, the hours of operation are already set at the suggested times.*
- Concern about weeds at the park. Strongly urge the use of low impact, non-chemical weed control whenever possible. *FWP Response. FWP first completed and adopted a Weed Management Plan in 1993 for all FWP properties in Region 2, west-central Montana. That Weed Management Plan has been reviewed, updated and adopted again in 2001. The Weed Management Plan takes an integrated pest management approach (mechanical, biological and chemical) to weed control. Weed management is a complex task and requires complex solutions with the flexibility to change as new information is gathered, new control methods become available and new weed problems arise.*
- Concern about the layers of history that will be damaged or destroyed rather than preserved. Many grounds changes have been a negative experience. Grounds were once well maintained and inviting. Visitor experience, time-line from the Deschamps ownership to 2003 and the grounds are poorly cared for now. The corral is gone, homesteader shed slated to go. Work started before formal public comment. *FWP Response. Changing management direction from a working farm to a historic site can be awkward and difficult during the transition period. Because of the short time frame facing this Park in regards to the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Celebration and making the site somewhat functional to the public has required some decisions to be made that may not be supported by everyone. TRPHA relies very heavily on volunteers to help with the grounds maintenance. The focus of the hired staff has been to develop management & interpretive plans, secure funding for operations & capital projects, land acquisitions, and meet & greet the public on a daily basis. The decision to remove the corral was made to open the vista to the overlook. The corral itself was made of materials readily found at any farm & ranch supply store today and therefore not historic. More research and input from SHPO regarding the homesteader shed will be done before a decision is made regarding removal. Patience is needed as the Park begins to*

change. As the Master Site Plan and The Interpretive Concept Plan is realized, this site will become a state and national site that all can be proud of for what it will mean to Lolo and Montana.

- Use of the milk house & yard shed not consistent with the management agreement. *FWP Response. The intent of that section in the management agreement was to not allow a residence to be established at the park. Storage of personal items would not be allowed. The items currently being stored are items needed to support the interpretation of the park and/or the maintenance of the facilities.*
- Is the Conceptual Master Site Plan a final plan? Questions & comments brushed aside. *FWP response. During the summer of 2003 and shortly after the EA was circulated for public comment, the National Trust for Historic Preservation through a generous grant from the Dumke Foundation hired the Portico Group, to draw all the past planning efforts together to produce an Implementation Plan for Travelers' Rest State Park. A 4-day workshop involving TRPHA, FWP, Missoula County, Lolo Community and many other partners was held. The end result was a completed Implementation Plan in November 2003. The Implementation Plan is in line with the Draft Management Direction and the Conceptual Master Site Plan addressed in the EA. The Conceptual Master Site Plan was modified and changed some to better reflect the goals outlined in the Interpretive Plan which is part of the overall Implementation Plan. It is available for review at the park.*

Appendix C. Draft Management Plan

- On page 6, Public Involvement. The full name of the co-sponsoring group is "Idaho Montana Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects." *FWP Response. So noted & corrected.*
- On page 7, second paragraph. The planning team developed a conceptual Master Site Plan...". This should read Kent Watson & Associates prepared the plan, based upon their own expertise as landscape architects using information provided by the planning team and others. *FWP Response. So noted & corrected.*
- On page 8, Current Buildings and Use, 4th paragraph. This fourth paragraph needs to be replaced by the fourth paragraph found on page 11. *FWP Response. So noted & corrected.*
- On page 9, Access, Acquisition and Site Development, 2nd paragraph, last sentence, "It is possible that pedestrian and recreation access could also be directed to the Mormon Creek access." Need to define "recreation" access as it relates to the main or primary access. *FWP Response. As the main primary access changes from the Mormon Creek Road to Hwy 12, there will still be a need to maintain some public access from the Mormon Creek Road especially for the neighborhood on that side of the park. Some of the recreational opportunities available are fishing, wading, walking, wildlife viewing, etc.*
- On page 9, Access, Acquisition and Site Development, 3rd paragraph refers to a 10 acre conservation easement. Is that the one now in place? *FWP Response. It is referring to the Holt conservation easement that FWP will actually receive early in 2004.*
- On page 8, Current Buildings and Use, 6th paragraph, refers to a small weathered shed at the edge of the bench that is slated for removal. "All of the structures and features located on the property need to be evaluated for the National Register of Historic Places before anything is removed, even if the removal results in a "positive development". For example, removal of the corrals and pens has opened the area between the garages and the overlook and could be considered as a "positive". However, the 1937 aerial photographs indicated the presence of corrals and pens, more than likely the corrals evolved and changed positions and materials on a regular basis, but, something that may or may not have been a contributing element to a historic site has been removed before a determination was made. Again, extreme caution is necessary." *FWP Response. Agree with the comment & concern. Until an evaluation is*

completed on the structures, the small weathered shed or other structures will not be removed.

- *“The draft management plan dances around the question of the historical archeological record while never quite facing it directly. The plan notes in several places that “SHPO will be consulted” or that the resource will be protected.” FWP Response. SHPO and/or archeologists have been consulted on projects at the park. On page 6 of the Draft Management Plan, under the section called Roles and Responsibilities, it says, “FWP will provide technical assistance to TRPHA in the management of the site. This will include review of site and construction plans, review of programmatic objectives, assurance of public involvement, and environmental and cultural compliance.” It is our intent to manage and be sensitive to the historic archeological record and to continue consulting with SHPO and/or archeologists as projects move forward.*
- *“The management plan also includes references to include the Nez Perce. Support this part of the plan without reservation for several reasons.” FWP Response. Agree with the concern & comment.*

DECISION

Based on the analysis in the Environmental Assessment (EA) and the applicable laws, regulations and policies, I have determined that this action will not have a significant effect on the natural or human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

It is my decision to implement the proposed action with the identified FWP responses and proceed with the management and development of this site. By notification of this Decision Notice, the draft EA is hereby made the final EA with the FWP responses in this Decision Notice. The final EA with Decision Notice may be viewed at or obtained from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks at the above address.

Please direct any further requests or questions to Mack Long, Region Two Supervisor, or Lee Bastian, Region Two Park Manager.

Mack Long, Regional Supervisor

Date: